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Letters

Plainly speaking

SCIENCE NEWS generally "tells it like it is," using words that portray the realities of the scientific situation. Deaths among animals and humans are properly called deaths, not "terminations" as in your report on researchers' growing "success" in aborting one of two fraternal twins (SN: 5/6/89, p.278).

Stop using the pro-abortion euphemisms when describing abortions. These doctors "killed" these living fetuses; they didn't "terminate" them.

Michael Stratton
Brea, Calif.

It's true that "kill" is more precise than "terminate," which means "to put an end to." Whether "terminate" functions as a euphemism in the article is debatable, since its meaning in this context is explicit. Strictly speaking, the term "abortion" would not apply to the procedure,

This Week

- 388 Building Chemicals the New-Fashioned Way
- 388 Human origins recede in southern Asia
- 389 Working women take one benefit to heart
- 389 Test diagnoses AIDS in newborns
- 389 More questions plague nuclear waste dump
- 390 Fish oil slows some developing cancers
- 390 Looking for Lyme in the nervous system
- 391 Rocky Flats radiation remains unexplained
- 391 The ups and downs of solar flares
- 391 Supernova mystery: Cracking the Crab
- 399 Brown dwarfs caught in the heat of youth

Articles

392 Blazing Blossoms

Cover: The cool white splendor of a flowering *Philodendron insigne* belies the warm reality of its heat-generating blossom. *P. insigne* is one of several plant species whose flowers — radiant in more than the usual sense — can warm themselves above ambient temperatures. Scientists studying the unusual metabolic pathways in these botanical oddities foresee theoretical and practical applications of their work. (Photo: Deni Bown)



Departments

- 386 Science on the Air
- 387 Letters
- 395 Semi-Annual Index

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connoting as it does an early expulsion of the dead fetus.

The author made no attempt to soft-pedal the medical details of this still-experimental procedure, while emphasizing its agonizing ethical and emotional implications. — the editors

Roots of violence

I was surprised to note that your report on Dorothy Otnow Lewis' presentation at the recent APA meeting ("Adding up violent vulnerabilities," SN: 5/20/89, p.318) contained no mention of participants' objections. Logically, Lewis' prediction is akin to predicting that, once one has established that most objects from a given agglomeration sharing similar attributes stem from some common cause, one can then assume that the cause isolated is the only reasonable one. More simply put, Lewis is assuming without proper substantiation that youth violence can be

expected to stem only from the sources she has isolated in her work.

Eric Scoles
Ithaca, N.Y.

Double-ring collider

In "SSC gets off to a magnetic start" (SN: 5/13/89, p.303), you report that the ring will be 53 miles, being made up of more than 83 miles (8,000 × 55 feet) of magnets. Perhaps it will be a bit *too* magnetic.

John R. Naples
DeKalb, Ill.

The Superconducting Super Collider will actually have two rings of magnets, one on top of the other, carrying beams of protons in opposite directions. Each ring will consist of roughly 4,000 dipole magnets to bend the protons into a curved path and about 750 quadrupole magnets to focus the beams. — I. Peterson

JUNE 24, 1989

387